

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 282 942

UD 025 536

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TITLE High School Summer Preparation for Raising Educational Performance (PREP) Program End-of-Year Report, 1986. OEA Evaluation Report.
INSTITUTION New York City Board of Education, Brooklyn. Office of Educational Assessment.
PUB DATE Mar 87
NOTE 36p.; Prepared by the OEA High School Evaluation Unit.
AVAILABLE FROM Office of Educational Assessment, New York City Board of Education, 110 Livingston Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201.
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Achievement; Compensatory Education; Economically Disadvantaged; High Schools; Peer Teaching; *School Readiness; *Summer Programs; Supplementary Education; Transitional Programs; Urban Education; *Writing Instruction
IDENTIFIERS *New York (New York)

ABSTRACT

In 1986, New York City's summer Preparation for Raising Education Performance (PREP) program operated for the fifth consecutive year. Summer PREP is designed to ease incoming students' transition into high school and to provide instruction in basic writing skills. The program also provided theme-based instruction, enrichment, and guidance services to incoming Chapter 1-eligible students in grades 9 and 10, plus limited English proficient (LEP) and special education students already in high school. During the summer 1986, the program served a total of 5,246 general education, 2,577 LEP, and 760 special education students. The instructional program consisted of a one-hour language arts class plus two other one-hour special interest classes four mornings each week, and a fifth morning was devoted to educational excursions. The 1986 program clearly met its objective of helping students improve their writing skills. Although overall attendance was relatively good, individual class sizes were somewhat smaller than expected. Evaluation findings suggest that a summer program with clearly defined focus is an effective method of helping students improve their skills in a relatively short period of time. In the future, it should be determined if resources are being used as effectively, and student mentors should receive additional training in their role as teacher and peer mentor before the summer program begins. A School Participation Guide is included. (KH)

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ED282942

1986 HIGH SCHOOL
SUMMER PREPARATION FOR RAISING
EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE
(PREP) PROGRAM
END-OF-YEAR REPORT

OEA Evaluation Report

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Evaluation Section Report
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March, 1987

1986 HIGH SCHOOL
SUMMER PREPARATION FOR RAISING
EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE
(PREP) PROGRAM
END-OF-YEAR REPORT

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SUMMARY

Now in its fifth year, the summer Preparation for Raising Educational Performance (PREP) program is designed to ease incoming students' transition into high school and to provide instruction in basic writing skills. The program also provided theme-based instruction, enrichment, and guidance services to incoming Chapter I-eligible ninth- and tenth-graders, plus Limited English Proficient (LEP) and special education students already in high school who could benefit from these services. During the summer 1986, the program served a total of 5,246 general education, 2,577 LEP, and 760 special education students.

Summer PREP operated from July 2 to August 1, a total of 22 instructional days. Focusing on the development of students' writing skills, the instructional program consisted of a one-hour language arts class plus two other one-hour special interest classes four mornings each week. The fifth morning was devoted to educational excursions. All students participated in a culminating activity which was a project resulting from the students' language arts activities, such as a publication, dramatic production, or some other assembly program.

The summer, 1986 PREP program clearly met its objective of helping incoming ninth- and tenth-grade students improve their writing skills. Overall more than 80 percent of the general education students improved these skills by the end of the program, and nearly 90 percent of the students who attended every day improved their writing skills. This is particularly impressive in light of the fact that only four of the five school days were devoted to classroom instruction, so that this improvement occurred over a period of 15 instructional days at the most. The findings suggest that a summer program with a clearly defined focus is an effective method of helping students improve their skills in a relatively short period of time. Although overall program attendance was relatively good, individual class sizes were somewhat smaller than expected. The use of student mentors was also important. However, mentors sometimes felt uncertain about their status vis-a-vis the students they were assisting. Based on the evaluation findings, the following specific recommendations are made:

- Future PREP programs should continue to focus on a specific aspect of student performance, such as the improvement of writing skills.
- The Division of High Schools should examine the number of students attending classes and participating in educational excursions to determine whether program resources are being utilized as effectively as possible.
- Students mentors should receive additional training in their role as teacher and peer mentor before the summer program begins.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The production of this report is the result of a collaborative effort of O.E.A. staff and consultants. In addition to those whose names appear on the cover, Rosalind Eichenstein, Philip Herr, Lori Poveromo, and Jerry Woods spent many hours interviewing program participants, coding their responses, and analyzing the data upon which this report is based. Madeline Marsden has typed, corrected, and duplicated this report. The Unit could not have produced the report without their able participation.

I. INTRODUCTION

PROGRAM BACKGROUND AND STRUCTURE

The summer high school Preparation for Raising Educational Performance (PREP) program is a theme-based program of instruction, enrichment, and supportive services for incoming ninth- and tenth-grade students who are Chapter I-eligible.* The program, which was first implemented in summer 1982, and which now operates both during the summer and the regular school year, is designed to ease the high school transition of intermediate and junior high school students. Both the 1985 and 1986 summer PREP programs were also open to limited English proficient (LEP)** and special education students who had recently entered high school and would benefit from the program.

The summer 1986 PREP program operated at 35 sites from July 2 to August 1, and focused on the development of students' writing skills. Students attended classes four mornings a week. One of these periods was a language arts class devoted to reading, writing, and oral communication; the other two periods were programmed by the individual schools to meet the needs of the student population they were serving. On the fifth morning, students went on excursions designed to complement and reinforce the theme of their

* Chapter I eligibility is based on a complex formula which uses the proportion of a school's students who either qualify for the free lunch program or are members of families eligible for Aid to Families with Dependent Children. State Education Department guidelines stipulate that any incoming ninth-or tenth-grade student from a public or private school who scores two or more years below grade level on a nationally-normed reading or mathematics test is eligible to participate in the summer program.

** A student is classified as LEP if he or she scored below the 21st percentile on the English section of the Language Assessment Battery (LAB). The LAB is a norm-referenced test used to measure the basic language skills of students whose native language is not English.

program. The culminating activity of the summer PREP program was a student of project resulting from students' language arts activities, such as a publication, dramatic production, or an assembly program.

EVALUATION OBJECTIVE

The overall goal of the summer 1986 PREP program was to ease the high school transition of entering ninth- and tenth-graders by enabling them to become acquainted with staff members and the school they would be attending in the fall. However, State Education Department (S.E.D.) officials stipulated that the program included student pre-and-posttesting on specific basic skills even though the program lasted only 22 days. Program administrators and S.E.D. staff agreed to measure changes in writing skills to meet this S.E.D. requirement. Thus, the specific program objective stated that general education students would improve their writing skills as a result of instruction received during the program. This objective was measured by a comparison of student writing samples prepared at the beginning and end of the program. This was the program's only formal evaluation objective.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

The Office of Educational Assessment/High School Evaluation Unit (O.E.A./H.S.E.U.) conducted both a quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the summer 1986 PREP program. The quantitative evaluation included analysis of the attendance of all students participating in the program and of writing samples for all general education students.* Because of an interest by program administrators, O.E.A. also examined student rosters to determine

* Program guidelines exempted LEP and special education students from the writing objective.

the percentage of summer PREP students who would be attending the same high school in fall, 1986 as they did in the summer program.

To collect qualitative data, O.E.A. sent a questionnaire to each teacher participating in the summer program. In addition, O.E.A. selected nine program sites, each receiving staff development training from a different teacher trainer, for an in-depth analysis of program implementation. Sample schools visited are indicated by an asterisk in the Appendix to this report. O.E.A. staff conducted an interview with each PREP site supervisor and with seven of the nine staff development specialists providing writing training. (Two of the staff development specialists were not available for an interview.) Evaluators also attended central staff training sessions on June 14, and June 25; observed several Summer PREP classes, staff development training sessions, and mentor training sessions; held informal interviews with a number of Summer PREP teachers; and formally surveyed 104 Summer PREP student mentors.

SCOPE OF THIS REPORT

Program implementation, including program structure and staff, staff development training, student recruitment, theme selection, instructional activities, educational excursions, and the role of student mentors, is described in Chapter II. Student attendance and achievement are analyzed in Chapter III, and conclusions and recommendations are included in Chapter IV. A list of program sites and cluster schools is attached in an Appendix.

II. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

PROGRAM SITES AND STAFF

Number of Program Sites

The summer 1986 PREP program was implemented at 35 sites--10 fewer than in the summer 1985 PREP program. The number of sites was reduced because some of the summer 1985 sites had not been fully utilized, and also because of a reduction in funds available for the program. Most sites were clustered with at least one nearby school for purposes of program planning and staffing. A list of the program sites and their cluster schools is provided in the Appendix to this report.

Central Program Administration

As for the summer 1985 program, a central program coordinator located at the school for Cooperative and Technical Education on 96th Street in Manhattan was responsible for overall program supervision and administration. The coordinator was aided by two assistant central coordinators, one of whom was primarily responsible for operational matters and one of whom acted as educational liaison.

Supervision of program sites was the responsibility of nine itinerant supervisors.* Each supervisor was a high school principal and was responsible for program implementation at three or four sites. Several of these itinerants had served in the same capacity the previous year.

Site Supervisors

Each summer PREP program site was directed by a site supervisor who was an appointed or acting assistant principal (A.P.) and who was assisted by

* Five additional special education supervisors were responsible for overall supervision of the instructional program for special education students in self-contained classes at five to seven sites each.

a school secretary. Site supervisors hired teachers and student mentors, recruited students, distributed materials, conducted classroom observations, reviewed lesson plans, submitted payrolls, and were responsible for general program administration and supervision. Two of the site supervisors at the sample schools had worked in the PREP program since its inception, and three had been site supervisors every year except the first.

Teachers

D.H.S. encouraged site supervisors to work with cluster school principals to hire interested and qualified staff at these sites. Program administrators requested that teachers at all sites have experience or special abilities in teaching writing in a theme-centered environment.* Special education teachers and E.S.L. teachers were also to be hired to teach in the summer program.

Site supervisors at the nine sample schools reported that they hired from five to 12 mainstream teachers. All had also hired at least one special education teacher; over one-half (55 percent) had two such teachers on staff. Four schools had hired at least one E.S.L. teacher; the numbers were one, two, three, and four, respectively.

Two hundred seventy-one teachers (86 percent) responded to the questionnaire prepared by O.E.A. Of this number, almost two-thirds (180) had taught writing before the beginning of the summer session, and about 35 percent had taught E.S.L. and a similar percentage had taught special education. About 38 percent were teaching English, 26 percent were teaching E.S.L., and 20

* However, program administrators indicated to O.E.A. that teachers who had previously taught in a summer program had "retention rights" under the United Federation of Teachers contract. In some cases, these teachers were not licensed to teach or experienced in teaching writing.

percent were teaching mathematics during the summer 1986 PREP program. Other subjects being taught included computer skills (15 percent), social studies or history (seven percent), science (six percent), drama (six percent), typing (six percent), and graphic arts (five percent). Fifteen percent of the teachers reported working with special education students.

Nearly 90 percent of the teachers said that the teaching skills they used in summer PREP were similar to those used during the regular school year. A few said that they spent more time working on writing and language skills, and some said that the atmosphere was more informal and the materials less difficult than those used during the school year.

Student Mentors

The summer program also utilized the services of student mentors to provide peer counseling and tutoring. The mentors were upper-term students who were or had been Chapter I-eligible and who were succeeding in school in terms of academics, attendance, punctuality, and involvement in school activities.

All of the sample schools had mentors for their mainstream students. The number of mentors per school ranged from five to 14; the average number was 11. Seven of the nine sample schools (77 percent) also had a few special education mentors, and four had E.S.L. mentors. Two-thirds of the mentors in the sample schools were female, and nearly 90 percent were working in the high school they attended during the regular school year. Only one-third had worked as a mentor during a previous summer PREP program. Fifty-six percent of the mentors were going to be seniors during the coming school year, 25 percent were going to be juniors, and 14 percent were going to be sophomores. The average age of the mentors was 16. Eighty-five percent of

the mentors reported that they had a school average of 80 or above last term. Ninety-one percent of the mentors said that they were planning to go to college; of these, 37 percent said they planned to enter a profession such as law, medicine, or engineering, and 24 percent said they were going to take business courses.

Guidance Counselors

Program guidelines specified that PREP sites were to have one guidance counselor for each 150 PREP students. D.H.S. was responsible for hiring these guidance counselors. Guidance counselors worked the same hours as teachers, and were responsible for:

- reviewing the records of all incoming PREP students to assure Chapter I eligibility and verify testing and immunization data;
- conducting large- and small-group guidance sessions for self-assessment, exploration of educational and career goals, and orientation to high school;
- involving student mentors in group guidance activities and providing on-going supervision of peer guidance procedures; and
- maintaining the academic and activity records of all students and forwarding these to guidance offices in September.

Assessment of guidance counselor activities was beyond the scope of the evaluation. However, site supervisors at the nine sample schools indicated that they had at least one PREP guidance counselor on staff during the summer program and one had two such counselors. Three of the sample schools (George Washington, Long Island City, and John Bowne) also had a guidance counselor specifically for E.S.L. students.

Teacher Trainers (Staff Development Specialists)

D.H.S. hired nine staff development specialists (S.D.S.s) to provide writing training to teachers at two to four PREP sites each, and eight

E.S.L. teacher trainers to assist E.S.L. teachers in lesson planning, use of materials, and methodology.

The writing S.D.S.s brought a variety of experience to the summer PREP program. About 40 percent had coordinated Chapter I or P.S.E.N.*-funded programs during the previous school year, 30 percent had worked as English teachers, and 15 percent each had coordinated reading or writing programs. Most (70 percent) had taken courses or workshops in teacher training and had trained teachers before, and several (40 percent) had trained teachers specifically in the teaching of writing. All had taught writing to high school students, and all but one had taken at least one course or workshop in writing instruction.

STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND CHARACTERISTICS

The summer 1986 PREP program was open to incoming Chapter I-eligible ninth- and tenth-grade students from both public and non-public intermediate and junior high schools, plus LEP and special education students who had recently entered high school and would benefit from the program. The PREP supervisor in each borough superintendent's office coordinated high school recruitment.

Recruitment efforts began in May with a letter sent by D.H.S. to parents of eligible participants informing them of the program. High school principals then sent a letter to principals of their feeder middle schools describing the program. Some also wrote to feeder school guidance counselors, the principal of their cluster school(s), E.S.L. students, and/or PREPeligible students or their parents. In a few cases, PREP staff members visited

* New York State funds for Pupils with Special Educational Needs (P.S.E.N.) become available to a school if a sufficient number of students fail to meet specified academic standards.

feeder schools with flyers about the program and made classroom presentations. One PREP site supervisor said they had trouble recruiting students for the program because of lack of follow-up by their feeder schools and also because the summer PREP program was competing with the regular summer school program, which was credit-bearing.

A total of 8,676 students participated in the summer 1986 PREP program. Sixty-one percent were classified as general education students, about 30 percent were E.S.L./bilingual students, and approximately nine percent were as special education students.*

As shown in Table 1, most general education students were incoming ninth-graders (71 percent), followed by incoming tenth-graders (26 percent). Over one-half of the special education students were also incoming ninth-graders (58 percent), while nearly two-fifths (39 percent) were incoming tenth-graders. Nearly one-half (44 percent) of E.S.L. students were incoming tenth-graders.

Overall, students were about 15 years old ($M = 15.2$; $S.D. = 1.2$). As shown in Table 2, on average, general education students were about one year younger than E.S.L. and special education students. The higher average age of the latter two groups can be partially ascribed to the fact that program guidelines allowed only E.S.L. and special education students who were already in high school to participate in the summer PREP program. Furthermore, many of the E.S.L. students were recent arrivals in the country who were qualified to enter the higher grades but needed assistance with their English-language skills.

* Classification information was available for 98 percent of the students.

Table 1
Summer 1986 PREP Program Participants'
Grade by Student Type

Previous Grade ^a	Student Type							
	General Education		E.S.L./ Bilingual		Special Education		Total	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Seventh	22	0.5	75	3.3	4	0.6	101	1.3
Eighth	3,466	71.1	821	35.7	410	57.5	4,697	59.5
Ninth	1,293	26.5	1,002	43.5	278	39.0	2,573	32.6
Tenth	76	1.6	324	14.1	20	2.8	420	5.4
Eleventh	19	0.4	75	3.3	1	0.1	95	1.2
Twelfth	<u>1</u>	<u>0.0</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>0.2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0.0</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>0.1</u>
TOTAL	4,877	100.0	2,301	100.0	713	100.0	7,891	99.1 ^b

^a Data were unavailable for nine percent (785) of the students.

^b The total does not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

- Nearly three-quarters of general education and over one-half of special education students were incoming ninth-graders. The majority of E.S.L. students were going to be tenth-graders during the coming school year.

Table 2
Summer 1986 PREP Participants'
Age by Student Type

Age ^a Range	Student Type							
	General Education		E.S.L./ Bilingual		Special Education		Total	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
13-14	2,061	41.7	502	21.7	84	11.8	2,647	33.2
15-16	2,662	53.8	1,117	48.2	519	73.1	4,298	53.9
17-18	215	4.3	570	24.6	99	14.0	884	11.1
19-20	8	0.2	127	5.5	8	1.1	143	1.8
TOTAL	4,946	100.0	2,316	100.0	710	100.0	7,972	100.0
Average Age	14.8		15.8		15.6		15.2	

^a Six percent (350) of the general education students, ten percent (261) of the E.S.L. /bilingual students, and six percent (50) of the special education students were missing age information.

- On average, general education students were about one year younger than E.S.L. and special education students.

PROGRAM THEMES

As in previous summer PREP programs, schools used one or more themes to unify instruction and increase student interest. Program guidelines provided a "Select-a-Theme" sheet which listed several possible theme categories, including career and self-exploration, exploring New York City, consumer issues in New York City, and the world of the 21st century. However, the themes reported by PREP staffers varied somewhat from this list. More than one-third of the teachers identified writing and/or the arts as one of their themes, and another one-third mentioned either careers or New York City. Other themes mentioned more than once were communications (six percent), computers (five percent), law and police science (three percent), and human values (two percent).

Several schools had more than one theme. For example, George Washington High School used both the performing arts and business. At Adlai Stevenson High School, students were divided into five modules, each of which was block programmed and worked with a different theme.

Almost 95 percent of the summer PREP teachers believed that their theme(s) were well integrated into classroom instruction. Methods of integration were as varied as the themes and schools themselves. For example, PREP English and mathematics at Automotive High School used ads in the Daily News for writing and mathematics exercises which exemplified their theme of "Living and Learning in New York City." At Curtis High School, PREP instructors had students in every class write about July 4th and the emigration of their people to this country as part of their theme of "Freedom to Grow and Learn."

About three-quarters of the teachers and site supervisors believed that their theme(s) were very effective in providing a meaningful focus for

student writing and motivating students to actively participate in school activities. However, only about two-thirds of both groups felt that their themes per se were effective in introducing students to high school, improving their basic skills, or preparing them for careers.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT TRAINING

Summer PREP Training Session

D.H.S. sponsored a training session for summer PREP teachers, guidance counselors, and teacher-trainers two weeks before the summer program began. Most of the training consisted of workshops in various subjects such as student writing or student mentors.

Teachers had the option of attending two of four categories of workshop. Seventysix percent (198) of the teachers responding to an O.E.A. questionnaire indicated that they attended one of nine workshop sessions on student writing, 49 percent (119) attended one of five workshop sessions on educational excursions, 38 percent (91) attended one of five sessions on student mentors, and 15 percent (35) attended a workshop on English as a second language (E.S.L.).

Between 66 and 90 percent of the teachers believed that the workshop they attended dealt very well with most of the material presented. However, only 50 percent believed that basic poetry and playwriting techniques had been handled well in the writing workshop. The same percentage believed that organizational techniques had been well handled in the educational excursions workshop and that the training received was helpful during the summer and would be helpful during the school year. By contrast, about 80 percent of the teachers attending the other workshops (student writing, student mentors, and E.S.L.), believed that the training was helpful during

the summer, and about two-thirds of those participating in the writing and E.S.L. workshops thought it would be helpful during the school year. Only 30 percent thought the mentors' workshop would be helpful during the school year -- possibly because mentors would not be available to them at that time.

Student Mentor Workshops

D.H.S. also sponsored a three-hour training conference on June 25, for students who would be acting as mentors during the summer 1986 PREP program. About 15 students each attended ten sessions on "The Role of the Mentor in a Writing Classroom." The S.D.S.s teaching the sessions described the roles the mentors were expected to play in the writing classroom, broke the students into groups to discuss the problems they might encounter while playing these roles, and then brought the students back together to discuss the types of writing (journal, dialogue, free, etc.) with which they would be dealing.

The student mentors then attended one of ten sessions on "The Student Mentor as a Peer Counselor." The guidance counselors and other staff leading the sessions asked the mentors to name some of the problems they expected to encounter, then had them role-play ways in which these problems could be solved.

About three-fourths of the mentors interviewed by O.E.A. attended the training conference. Roughly two-thirds said that the conference was very helpful in preparing them to be role models, about one half said it was effective in teaching them how to help students with writing assignments, but only one-third believed it was helpful in teaching them how to assist language arts teachers.

Weekly Training Sessions in the Schools

To further assist teachers in helping summer PREP students improve their writing skills, teacher trainers with experience in teaching writing led a training session at each PREP site one afternoon a week. S.D.S.s estimated that, on average, they spent about 40 percent of this training time lecturing on and demonstrating teaching techniques, another 40 percent discussing actual classroom practices and problems with the teachers, and the remainder of their time having teachers role play or discuss hypothetical situations. The most frequently discussed topics at these training sessions were how to respond appropriately and constructively to students' writing, the best ways to group students for writing tasks (composition, revision, etc.), the writing process itself, preparing lessons related to educational excursions, how to incorporate themes into classroom instruction, and developing strategies for teaching writing in classes other than language arts.

Some S.D.S.s reported adjusting the content of their training sessions in response to requests from teachers or site supervisors. The S.D.S. at Evander Childs, for example, developed additional course handouts at the request of the summer PREP teachers, and the S.D.S. at Adlai Stevenson High School helped student mentors in their work with PREP students at the request of the site supervisor. In most cases, S.D.S.s involvement in staff planning for the students' culminating writing project was limited, although in a few instances, an S.D.S. gave a particular school more extensive help.

Teachers' ratings of these S.D.S. training sessions were high. Between 85 and 90 percent believed that their writing S.D.S. had provided adequate or very adequate training in teaching writing to PREP students, and in enhancing teaching skills that could be transferred to the regular school

year. The S.D.S.s themselves believed that the instruction they provided had been helpful, especially for those teachers with limited classroom experience in teaching writing. Several suggested that they could be even more effective if the program was longer and they were involved in program planning earlier.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Program guidelines stipulated that each school's theme was to be the subject of language arts classes; that students in these classes were to work in peer writing groups, assisted by a trained student mentor; that educational excursions were to relate to the school's theme(s) and be incorporated into program instruction; and that one of the three one-hour classes could be devoted to preparation of the school's culminating summer PREP activity.

Visits to PREP classrooms by evaluators indicated that these program guidelines were substantially met. In most cases, students in language arts classes were working together in small groups, assisted by the teacher and by a mentor moving from group to group. The subject matter was usually clearly related to one of the school's themes or to an upcoming or completed educational excursion, although in a few cases, other types of material were being used. (For example, at Fashion Industries High School, students were working with a "hero list" in a theme-writing exercise, rather than with the school's fashion theme.) In most cases, teachers concentrated on helping students produce and respond positively to the content of material rather than on the correctness of the form or grammar of the writing.

In most instances, the culminating project of the school was a newspaper,

pamphlet, or literary magazine. However, three of the sample schools also had playwriting or the performing arts as one of their themes, and in these schools, O.E.A. evaluators observed students being assisted by a professional playwright. At one class observed at George Washington High School, the playwright and most of the students working on playscripts were Hispanic and communicated primarily in Spanish. Spanish was also the predominant language in a computer-oriented business class observed at this school. However, at another school visited by the evaluation team, a language arts class for beginning E.S.L. students was conducted bilingually. The evaluator noted that in this instance, some students did not actively participate because they seemed to be having trouble expressing themselves in English. A guidance counselor later commented to the evaluator that most E.S.L. students come from a culture with a tradition of respect for schools and teachers and therefore tend to be quiet and unassertive in the classroom.

An O.E.A. evaluator also visited a special education class. The evaluator noted that there seemed a greater diversity in age and size among the 10 students in the class than in the mainstream and E.S.L. classes he had visited. However, most of the special education students participated actively in writing about and discussing stressful situations in high school, and seemed to enjoy and benefit from their participation in the class.

Evaluators reported that although some of the summer PREP classes had as few as five students, the average number was between 10 and 15 students. Most of the students they observed seemed to be actively involved in and enjoying class activities. However, in a few instances, the students appeared to be somewhat listless and bored, perhaps partially because the

weather was very hot and the school was not air-conditioned. Teachers as a whole were also seen as sincerely involved with program activities and the students. However, the evaluators noted that a few teachers did not always mark or comment upon the work done by the students, which could be somewhat demoralizing.

EDUCATIONAL EXCURSIONS

In the summer 1986 PREP program, educational excursions were scheduled for one morning a week rather than taking place in the afternoon as they had during the summer 1985 program. D.H.S. provided the schools with a list of approved excursions to museums, parks, and other sites.

Based on responses to a questionnaire by site supervisors at sample schools, the most popular excursion was to Hayden Planetarium, with almost 90 percent of the schools electing to make this trip. Next most popular were a tour of Lincoln Center (55 percent), the New York Career Center (55 percent), the Bronx Zoo (44 percent), Sleepy Hollow Restoration (33 percent), and the U.S.S. Intrepid (33 percent). About 20 percent of the schools scheduled trips to the United Nations, the Museum of Natural History, the Whitney Museum, and/or the Bronx Botanical Gardens.

Each student also saw a Broadway show during one afternoon of program operation. The most frequently attended show was A Chorus Line, followed by The Mystery of Edwin Drood, and Big River. Other shows attended were Cats, 42nd Street, and I'm Not Rappaport.

More than 90 percent of the teachers responding to the O.E.A. survey believed that these excursions were successfully incorporated into the writing curriculum. However, a few E.S.L. teachers indicated that although

their LEP students profited from becoming acquainted with these cultural resources, they were not always able to write successfully about them.

A few staff members expressed some negative feelings about this component of the summer program. One of the site supervisors said that not all of the students liked going on trips, resulting in relatively low attendance. Another felt that the trips took away from class time, and that it would have been better to have these trips (and other activities) during the afternoons as they were during the summer 1985 program. A third site supervisor commented that both teachers and mentors missed the afternoon program that had been part of previous summer programs because it had given them time to get to know the students better.

STUDENT MENTORS

Student mentors were an active and important part of the summer 1986 PREP program. Nearly 93 percent of the teachers responding to the O.E.A questionnaire reported that student mentors had assisted them in the classroom. The number of mentors reported by sample schools ranged from seven to fourteen; the average number working at a PREP site was 12. About one-third of these students had served as a mentor during the previous summer's PREP program.

On average, mentors worked with about 45 students a week. About 75 percent were general education students, 20 percent were E.S.L. students, and five percent were special education students. PREP teachers reported that the activities most frequently performed by mentors were distributing materials (92 percent) and acting as role models (90 percent). Mentors were also frequently used for tutoring and small group instruction (80 percent each) and for peer guidance (71 percent), but were less often asked to help

with large group instruction (42 percent). Eight-eight percent of the teachers believed that the mentors had been very helpful to them; only six percent said that they were of little or no help. Many said that the mentors' most important contribution was helping to create a positive atmosphere for the summer PREP students.

More than three-quarters of the mentors themselves reported that they had frequently provided academic assistance to students, helped teachers with administrative matters, and performed other chores such as paperwork and recordkeeping, but only 49 percent said that they had often acted as a peer counselor. However, many said that in addition to helping PREP students with their writing, they also frequently told them about their own experiences in high school, gave general information about high school, or told them who to see to get their questions answered. Only 30 percent said they frequently helped students with mathematics. About one half of the mentors believed that they had learned a lot about the subjects of the classes in which they were working.

Mentors' group and peer guidance activities were supervised by the summer PREP guidance counselor(s) at the site, who also provided additional training in conflict resolution and other subjects. Training sessions included open discussion of the problems encountered by mentors, plus guided role-playing in which one mentor portrayed an upset student and another mentor attempted to assist the student. Mentors reported that their main problems were student discipline, the ambiguity of their role as half-student and half-teacher, and the difficulty of upholding teachers or school rules when they did not personally agree with them.

III. PROGRAM FINDINGS

NUMBER OF PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

As indicated earlier, a total of 8,676 students participated in the summer 1986 PREP program -- about 900 less than the number served by the summer 1985 program. However, the proportions of general education, LEP, and special education students served were very similar to those served during the summer 1985 program. In 1986, these proportions were 61, 30, and nine percent, respectively, while in 1985, they were 64, 26, and 10 percent, respectively.

ENROLLMENT AND ATTENDANCE

The 1986 summer school session began on Wednesday, July 2 and ended on Friday, August 1. Since July 4th was a holiday, the total number of instructional days was 22. More than 70 percent of the 8,676 students served by the program were enrolled on July 2, and another ten percent were enrolled on July 3. By the end of the first full school week (July 11th), about 98 percent of the students served by the program were enrolled.

Nearly 99 percent (8,583) of the students participating in the program had valid attendance data. On average, slightly less than 15 percent of the students participating in the program came to school every day. About 50 percent attended 18 or more days, and a little more than 75 percent attended about one-half of the time. The average attendance rate was 72 percent (S.D. = 28.8) slightly less than 16 days.

There were some significant differences between the three categories of students participating in the program, however. On average, E.S.L./ bilingual students had much better attendance than general education or special

education students. Almost one-fourth (585) of the 2,577 E.S.L. students had perfect attendance, in contrast to about 10 percent (547) of the 5,137 general education students and nine percent (65) of the 743 special education students. E.S.L. students' mean attendance (82 percent) was also substantially higher than that of general (68 percent) and special education (69 percent) students.

WRITING IMPROVEMENT

Since the summer, 1986 PREP program focused on the development of students' writing skills, the evaluation objective was for general education students to improve these skills over the course of the program. Improvement was measured by a holistic evaluation of a writing sample prepared by students at the beginning and end of the program. Teachers rated these papers using a scale with the following levels:

- Unacceptable paper
- A very poor paper, inadequate in most areas
- A weak paper inadequate in two or more areas
- A somewhat less than adequate paper
- An adequate paper

Within these levels, teachers made additional judgements regarding the student's adherence to the topic, word choice and use, and other parameters.

Students prepared the pretest writing sample during the first full week of program operation and the posttest sample on July 30th, two days before the end of the program. The program objective was decisively met; of the 3,566 general education students with both pretest and posttest scores (68 percent of the general education students served), nearly 81 percent (2,876) were rated as having improved their writing.

Not surprisingly, a student's chance of improving was substantially affected by the number of days service he or she received. Eighty-nine percent of the students who attended for 21 or 22 days improved their writing, while 81 percent of those who attended for four weeks (16-20 days), 68 percent of those who attended for three weeks (11-15 days), and 60 percent of those who attended between six and ten days improved. Only 21 percent of those who attended for one to five days improved their scores.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The summer, 1986 PREP program clearly met its objective of helping incoming ninth- and tenth-grade students improve their writing skills. More than 80 percent of the general education students improved these skills by the end of the program, and nearly 90 percent of the students who were there every day improved their writing skills. This is particularly impressive in light of the fact that only four of the five school days were devoted to classroom instruction, so that this improvement occurred over a period of 15 instructional days at the most. This suggests that a summer program with a clearly defined focus is an effective method of helping students improve their skills in a relatively short period of time.

The reasons for the decline in enrollment from the summer 1985 program are not clear. It is possible that the reduction in program funds may have limited the amount of student recruiting that was done, and the smaller number of program sites may have discouraged participants of some students who were not close to a program site. However, other elements could also have come into play, such as unusually warm weather or the attractions of other activities such as the Statue of Liberty celebration.

Program attendance overall was relatively good, and E.S.L. students had a considerably better record than the student population as a whole. Based on the observations made by the evaluation team, however, individual classes were somewhat smaller than expected. This might suggest that program size should be carefully examined to determine whether staff resources are being allocated as effectively as possible. The average number of students participating in educational excursions might also be scrutinized to determine whether adjustments in this aspect of the program should be made.

Staff training efforts appeared to be thorough and effective. The majority of teachers receiving this training clearly believed that it helped them aid summer PREP students improve their writing skills. No adjustments in this aspect of the program seem indicated.

The use of student mentors also seemed to be an effective and valuable part of the program, particularly in language arts classes where mentors could provide direct assistance to students working in small groups. Mentors were also seen as important role models by the classroom teachers and by the mentors themselves. However, it appears the mentors sometimes felt uncertain about their status vis-a-vis the students they were assisting, which suggests that additional training in this area could be fruitful.

Little information on guidance activities was gathered by O.E.A. evaluators, although it appears that such activities by both guidance counselor, and mentors were frequent. Future program evaluations should include a closer look at this aspect of program operation.

Based on the findings of the evaluation, the following specific recommendations are made:

- Future PREP programs should continue to focus on a specific aspect of student performance, such as the improvement of writing skills.
- The average number of students attending classes at program sites and participating in educational excursions should be examined to determine whether program resources are being utilized as effectively as possible.
- Student mentors should receive additional training in their joint role as teachers and peer mentors before the summer PREP program begins.

APPENDIX
SUMMER 1986 HIGH SCHOOL PREP PROGRAM
SCHOOL PARTICIPATION GUIDE

<u>PROGRAM SITE</u>	<u>CLUSTER SCHOOLS</u>
MANHATTAN	
George Washington*	A. Philip Randolph
H.S. of Fashion Industries*	Chelsea H.S. for Humanities
Julia Richman	Art & Design Manhattan Center Park East
Louis Brandeis	Martin L. King, Jr. West Side High School
Murry Bergtraum	Mabel D. Bacon Washington Irving Norman Thomas Satellite Academy
Park West	Fiorello H. LaGuardia H.S. of Graphic Comm. Arts
Seward Park	Lower East Side Prep
BRONX	
Adlai E. Stevenson*	
Christopher Columbus	Herbert H. Lehman
Evander Childs*	Harry Truman
Grace Dodge	Jane Addams
James Monroe	
John F. Kennedy	
Morris	Bronx Regional South Bronx
Samuel Gompers	Alfred E. Smith
Theodore Roosevelt	William H. Taft
Walton	DeWitt Clinton

* = Sample School

PROGRAM SITECLUSTER SCHOOLS

BROOKLYN

Automotive*

Boy & Girls*

Eastern District

George Wingate

James Madison

John Dewey

John Jay

Lafayette

Prospect Heights

Erasmus Hall

QUEENS

Andrew Jackson

August Martin

Far Rockaway

Franklin K. Lane

George Westinghouse

Thomas Jefferson
Street Academy
William H. Maxwell

Bushwick

Paul Robeson

Canarsie
Midwood
Edward R. Murrow
South ShoreAbraham Lincoln
Sheepshead Bay
William E. GradyH.S. of Telecommunications
Sarah J. HaleFort Hamilton
New Utrecht
Franklin D. Roosevelt

Clara Barton

Aviation
Springfield Gardens
Hillcrest
Thomas Edison
Jamaica

Beach Channel

East New York
Grover Cleveland
John Adams
Richmond Hill

PROGRAM SITE

CLUSTER SCHOOLS

QUEENS

John Bowne*

Francis Lewis
Bayside
Forest Hills
Martin Van Buren
Flushing
Benjamin Cardozo

Newtown

Long Island City*

Queens Vocational
William C. Bryant

STATEN ISLAND

Curtis*

All Staten Island Schools